

Message Text

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PASS SANDY WINSTON LOS DEL

FOLLOWING REPEAT SINGAPORE 3851 ACTION SECSTATE INFO USICA WASHDC
30 AUG 78.

QUOTE: UNCLAS SINGAPORE 3851

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLOS, SN

SUBJECT: MEDIA COMMENT ON UNCLOS

REF: STATE 213683

1. SINGAPORE'S "BUSINESS TIMES," AUGUST 22 CARRIED UPI
REPORT OF REMARKS ON DEEP SEABED MINING BY RICHARDSON
IN INTERVIEW WITH "U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT."

2. AFTERNOON PAPER, "NEW NATION" OF SAME DAY HAD
REUTERS REPORT OF RICHARDSON'S WARNING THAT "FAILURE
TO ENACT LEGISLATION WOULD RESULT IN THE DISPERSAL
OF PEOPLE SKILLED ENOUGH TO MINE BELOW THE OCEANS..."

3. MORNING PAPER,,"STRAITS TIMES," AUGUST 23 CARRIED
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UPI REPORT OF RICHARDSON MAKING IT CLEAR THAT U.S.
WILL NOT SETTLE FOR ANY INTERNATIONAL LAW OF SEA TREATY
UNLESS IT INCLUDES "ASSURED ACCESS TO SEABED MINERALS
TO AMERICAN MINING FIRMS."

4. "STRAITS TIMES," AUGUST 24 HAD EDITORIAL ENTITLED
"FINAL STRETCH." FULL TEXT FOLLOWS:

"THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE MARATHON UN LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE HAS RESUMED FROM WHERE IT LEFT OFF IN GENEVA AMIDST HOPES THAT IT COULD BE ENTERING THE HOME STRETCH. BUT IT WILL BE HEAVY GOING BECAUSE THE LAST LAP IS CONSIDERED THE MOST ARDUOUS AND PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES RUN THE RISK OF BEING BOGGED DOWN ON A NUMBER OF SO-CALLED "HARD-CORE" ISSUES CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO AGREEMENT ON A CONVENTION WHICH CONTINUES TO ELUDE THE CONFERENCE AFTER FIVE YEARS OF INTENSIVE ACTIVITIES. THE KEY ISSUE FACING THE PRESENT SESSION, AND ONE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO BOTH DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, CONCERNS SEABED RESOURCES LYING BEYOND NATIONAL LIMITS. WELL OVER HALF OF THE SURFACE OF THE GLOBE IS INVOLVED. WITH THE WORLD AWARE THAT NOT ONLY OIL BUT VAST AMOUNTS OF ESSENTIAL MINERALS--MAINLY MANGANESE, COPPER, COBALT AND NICKEL--ARE TO BE FOUND ON THE SEABED, THERE HAS BEEN GROWING CONCERN ABOUT HOW DEEP SEABED MINING IS TO BE TACKLED AND ITS BENEFITS BISTRIBUTED.

"THERE IS A WIDESPREAD AGREEMENT THAT THESE RESOURCES CONSTITUTE THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND, A CONCEPT WHICH INSPIRED THE ORIGINAL CONVENORS OF THE CONFERENCE. BUT THE REALITY IS THAT THE TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT RESTS IN A FEW, MAINLY PRIVATE, HANDS AND IN A FEW INDUSTRIALIZED UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRIES--THE U.S., BRITAIN AND JAPAN ARE AMONG THEM--SOME OF WHICH ARE RARING TO GO AHEAD WITH UNILATERAL MINING AND EXPLOITATION WITHOUT WAITING FOR A TREATY TO BE SIGNED. THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR EXAMPLE IS EXPECTED TO ADOPT AN OCEAN MINING BILL AUTHORIZING SUCH OPERATIONS BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, THOUGH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN HAS SAID DEEP SEA MINING OPERATIONS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BEGIN FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS. THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WANT ALL SEABED RESOURCES TO BE DEVELOPED BY A SINGLE ENTERPRISE FOR COMMON BENEFIT WHEREAS THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES FAVOR A PARALLEL SYSTEM UNDER WHICH DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE CARRIED OUT SIMULTANEOUSLY BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND A COMMON ENTERPRISE.

"OBVIOUSLY THE WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE MUST BE A COMPROMISE. MUTUAL CONCESSIONS WILL NOW BE NEEDED, ON BOTH SIDES IF THE HOPED-FOR SEA LAW CONVENTION IS TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY. WITHOUT A CONVENTION THE POOR COUNTRIES HAVE MORE TO LOSE THAN THE RICH COUNTRIES."

5. RADIO AND TELEVISION SINGAPORE (RTS) REPORTED
CONFERENCE WITHOUT COMMENT
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